

Medicare exists to provide for the healthcare needs of Australians, and I do not believe that this definition can be stretched to include the practice of sex-selective abortion. Therefore, I would support an amendment aimed at preventing the use of Medicare funds to subsidise this practice.

As sex-selective abortion is performed purely upon the basis of preference, it does not take into account any medical considerations and therefore cannot be considered in any way necessary. Other procedures that are undertaken on the basis of preference, such as elective cosmetic surgery, are not covered by Medicare and indeed cannot be without an improper use of taxpayer funds. In the same way, taxpayers should not be obliged to pay for decisions that are based purely upon personal or cultural preference.

I wish to address two objections to this amendment: firstly, that it will restrict abortion access, and secondly, that sex-selective abortion is not a problem in Australia, or indeed even present here. In response to the first: this amendment would not restrict abortion in any way. It would merely ensure that Medicare funds are not improperly used to subsidise elective procedures undergone purely on the basis of preference. In response to the second: if sex-selective abortion does not pose a problem here, well and good, and the amendment will do no harm. It remains necessary, however, that the amendment be passed for the reasons that I have outlined in my second paragraph.